

## Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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R 211010Z JUL 76

FM USMISSION USBERLIN

TO AMEMBASSY BONN

INFO SECSTATE WASHDC 2817

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY MOSCOW

USMISSION NATO

C O N F I D E N T I A L USBERLIN 1496

E.O.11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, WB, UK, US, FR, UR

SUBJECT: INCIDENTS AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE

REF: A) USBERLIN 1163

1. SUMMARY: SINCE INCIDENT INVOLVING FRENCH CAPTAIN GRASSET IN MAY ALLIES, PRIMARILY THE BRITISH, HAVE EXPERIENCED SERIES OF DELAYS WHILE PROCESSING THROUGH CHECKPOINT CHARLIE. CAUSE OF PROBLEM HAS BEEN QUESTION AS TO WHICH PAGES OF PASSPORTS BRITISH AND FRENCH CIVILIANS SHOULD SHOW WHEN PROCESSING THROUGH CHECKPOINT. MOST RECENT INCIDENT THIS MONTH INVOLVED WIFE OF BRITISH COMMANDANT. THIS BROUGHT MATTERS TO HEAD AND BRITISH POLAD MET WITH SENIOR SOVIET OFFICIAL TO WORK OUT UNDERSTANDING AS TO WHAT ACCEPTED PROCEDURES FOR BRITISH CIVILIAN TRAVELLERS SHOULD BE. INCIDENTS FRAUGHT WITH MINUTIEAE, BUT IT IS EAST WHICH DISPLAYS GREATEST CONCERN OVER MINOR DEVIATIONS. END SUMMARY.

2. ON MAY 10 FRENCH CAPTAIN AND THREE FRENCH  
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CIVILIANS WERE HELD UP AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE FOR 15

MINUTES. ALTHOUGH FRENCH APPARENTLY RESOLVED THEIR PARTICULAR PROBLEM THROUGH A COMBINATION OF INTERNAL REGULATIONS AND PROTEST TO SOVIETS (REFTEL), INCIDENT APPEARS TO HAVE SET OFF SERIES OF DELAYS TO ALLIED TRAVELLERS AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE. US CIVILIAN PASSENGERS IN OFFICIAL MILITARY VEHICLES EXPERIENCED MINOR DELAYS ON TWO OCCASIONS DURING THE FIVE WEEK PERIOD IN QUESTION. OTHER SIMILARLY DOCUMENTED US TRAVELLERS PASSED CHECKPOINT WITHOUT INCIDENT. HOWEVER, BRITISH APPEAR TO HAVE BEEN PRIMARY TARGET FOR RECENT EAST GERMAN HARASSMENT. BRITISH DIFFICULTIES APPARENTLY DEVELOPED AS A RESULT OF CHANGES UNILATERALLY INTRODUCED BY THEMSELVES IN PROCEDURES THEY FOLLOW WHEN PROCESSING THROUGH THE CHECKPOINT. PRIOR TO 1974 BRITISH CIVILIANS RIDING IN UK MISSION VEHICLES WERE PERMITTED BY THE UK MISSION TO SHOW EAST GERMAN CHECKPOINT OFFICIALS ONLY THREE PAGES OF THEIR PASSPORT (PHOTOGRAPH AND TWO PAGES WITH PERSONAL DATA AND EXPIRE DATE OF PASSPORTS). IN 1974 BRITISH REGULATIONS WERE UNILATERALLY CHANGED TO INCLUDE SHOWING IF "OTHER DETAILS IF REQUESTED". IN PRACTICE THIS MEANT FIRST FOUR PAGES OF PASSPORT WERE SHOWN TOGETHER WITH ITS COVER. RECENTLY BRITISH REVERTED TO FORMER PRACTICES PERMITTING THEIR PERSONNEL TO SHOW ONLY PAGES 2, 3 AND 4 OF THEIR PASSPORTS TO THE EAST GERMAN CHECKPOINT GUARDS. THIS CHANGE IN PROCEDURE APPARENTLY CONFUSED THE EAST GERMANS WHO DELAYED VEHICLES UNTIL BRITISH TRAVELLERS SHOWED ALL FOUR PAGES.

3. ON JULY 10 BRITISH MILITARY VEHICLE CARRYING THREE CIVILIAN PASSENGERS INCLUDING WIFE OF BRITISH COMMANDANT WAS DETAINED FOR OVER 10 MINUTES AT CHECKPOINT CHARLIE. BRITISH UNIFORMED DRIVER APPARENTLY IRRITATED THAT HE WAS NOT PERMITTED TO PROCEED POSITIONED HIS CAR IN SUCH A WAY AS TO BLOCK CHECKPOINT TO ALL THRU TRAFFIC FOR FURTHER FIFTEEN MINUTES. AFTER DISPLAY OF CONSIDERABLE EMOTION EAST GERMAN CHECKPOINT COMMANDER PERMITTED MRS. REDGRAVE'S CAR TO PROCEED. TO INSURE THERE WOULD BE NO DIFFICULTIES

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UPON THEIR RETURN BRITISH MISSION SENT MILITARY PATROL INTO EAST BERLIN TO ESCORT HER BACK TO WEST BERLIN A SHORT TIME LATER.

4. AS A RESULT OF THIS LAST INCIDENT BRITISH POLAD ON JULY 13 CALLED IN SOVIET FIRST SECRETARY TYUTVUNOV WHO CAME TO BRITISH MISSION FOR APPOINTMENT ARMED WITH TWO PREPARED TEXTS IN RESPONSE TO EARLIER BRITISH

INQUIRIES ABOUT NUMEROUS DELAYS AT CHECKPOINT. THE FIRST TEXT DEALT IN SOME DETAIL WITH THE ALLEGED INFRINGEMENTS OF REGULATIONS BY ALLIED PERSONNEL (MOTLY BRITISH) WHEN CROSSING INTO EAST BERLIN VIA CHECKPOINT CHARLIE. SOVIETS DENIED THAT SOME INCIDENTS EVER TOOK PLACE AND STATED THAT ALL DELAYS HAD OCCURRED BECAUSE OF FAILURE OF BRITISH PERSONNEL TO OBSERVE REGULATIONS,. SECOND TEXT DEALT WITH FAILURE OF PERSONNEL IN CIVILIAN CLOTHING TRAVELLING IN ALLIED MILITARY VEHICLES TO PROPERLY IDENTIFY THEMSELVES AT CHECKPOINT. SPECIFICALLY, A NUMBER OF BRITISH CIVILIANS WERE SINGLED OUT FOR HAVING FAILED TO SHOW THE "SIGNAL PAGES" OF THEIR PASSPORTS, AN OBVIOUS REFERENCE TO PAGE 1 OF THE BRITISH PASSPORT. AFTER LENGTHLY DISCUSSION, TYUTYUNOV ASSURED BRITISH POLAD THAT IF PAGES 1 THROUGH 4 OF BRITISH PASSPORT WERE SHOWN TO EAST GERMAN CHECKPOINT PERSONNEL THERE WOULD BE NO FURTHER PROBLEMS. POLAD TOLD SOVIETS HE WOULD RECOMMEND SUCH A CHANGE IN PROCEDURE TO BRITISH COMMANDANT. BRITISH HAVE IN FACT AMENDED THEIR STANDING INSTRUCTIONS SO THAT CIVILIANS PROCEEDING THROUGH CHECKPOINT CHARLIE WILL SHOW FIRST FOUR PAGES OF PASSPORTS TO EAST GERMAN PERSONNEL.

5. FYI - US CIVILIANS TRAVELLING IN OFFICIAL MILITARY VEHICLES TO EAST BERLIN FOR OFFICIAL PURPOSES WHO ARE DOCUMENTED WITH TOUST PASSPORTS AND FRENCH CIVILIANS TRAVELLING IN FRENCH MILITARY VEHICLES FOLLOW SLIGHTLY DIFFERENT PROCEDURES BUT SHOW EAST GERMAN CHECKPOINT OFFICIALS ESSENTIALLY SAME INFORMATION AS CONTAINED ON FIRST FOUR PAGES OF BRITISH PASSPORTS. END FYI.

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6. COMMENT: ABOVE IS EXCELLENT EXAMPLE OF HOW "ESTABLISHED PROCEDURES" COME INTO BEING IN BERLIN ALMOST WITHOUT THEIR BEING NOTICED. ASIDE FROM THIS CURIOSITY FACTOR, HOWEVER, SERIES OF MINOR INCIDENTS IN QUESTION PROVIDES GRAPHIC EXAMPLE OF ATTENTION WHICH EAST CONTINUES TO PAY TO MINUTIAE WHEN DEALING WITH QUESTIONS OF ALLIED ACCESS RIGHTS, AND GIVES FURTHER EVIDENCE OF THEIR WILLINGNESS TO PROVOKE INCIDENTS OVER THE MOST PICAYUNE KIND OF ISSUE, WITH LITTLE OR NO APPARENT CONCERN FOR POSSIBLE WIDER EFFECTS. GEORGE

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